

Name: _____ Date: _____

Navigating Health & Wellness

Stress is a natural response to challenges and pressures in life. It can be caused by a variety of external and internal stressors that vary from person to person.

These stressors may include the following factors:

- Environmental: Work or school pressure, noise, natural disasters, living conditions, pollution
- Social and relationship: Family conflicts, friendship issues, bullying, peer pressure
- Biological and physical: Poor nutrition, chronic illness, hormonal changes, pain or injury
- Financial and economic: Debt, tuition costs, housing security, cost of living
- Major life changes: Moving to a new place, divorce, health diagnosis, loss of a family member, friend or pet
- Cultural and societal: Cultural expectations, discrimination, racism, social media influence, political climate
- Psychological and emotional: Perfectionism, fear of failure, low self-esteem, anxiety, trauma

Positive stress or eustress is short-term and can be a form of motivation that improves performance and is positive in the long run. Some examples include stress felt during sports games, taking on a new leadership position, watching a scary movie, preparing for an interview or going on an airplane.

Negative stress or distress may be short- or long-term. It can feel unmanageable and isolating, it may impact other areas of life or lead to anxiety. This stress may include worrying about money or finances, family conflicts or grief.

How does stress impact someone's ability to make decisions?

Strategies for Coping and Making Informed Decisions

Substances may be used for many reasons, including coping with stress. Stress, especially distress, can also inhibit our ability to make informed decisions. Therefore, it's important to consider existing strategies to help mitigate stress. It's important to have multiple coping methods to support different



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contextual stressful situations. What works for you one day may not work for you at a different time, so having more than one tool in your toolbox to pull from is good.

Possible strategies to cope with stress and make informed decisions:

- Journal
- Talk with a friend
- Talk with a trusted adult
- Go outside
- Listen to music
- Go on a walk or hike
- Exercise
- Stretch
- Garden
- Sleep
- Meditate or deep breathing
- Read
- Watch a movie
- Therapy
- Gather reliable information
- Practice positive self-talk
- Eat healthy foods
- Spend time with loved ones
- Practice gratitude
- Cook
- Take a break from social media and screens
- Paint
- Write poetry
- Play an instrument
- Write a song
- Draw
- Dance



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Mind Mapping

Use the space below to draw a mind map that identifies different sources of stress in your life. For each source of stress, create two branches: Short-term coping strategies (playing video games, talking to a friend, taking a break from screens) and long-term coping strategies (exercising regularly, developing time management skills, seeking therapy). Write down at least one short-term and one long-term strategy for each stressor you list.

